

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for selecting one of a plurality of service providers for connection to a computer system through a network, the apparatus comprising:

at least one database containing data regarding parameters of each service provider and service quality requirements for service types; and

a decision making unit connected to said at least one database for selecting one of said plurality of service providers to be connected to said computer system, said selecting being made according to decision making criteria and said data from said at least one database, and wherein said decision making unit includes a criteria unit for selecting criteria from multiple criteria to be used in making a decision for selecting one of the service providers and a decision making agent unit for making the decision based on said selected criteria; and

a scheduling agent, which is coupled to the decision making unit, for controlling connection of the computer system to the selected service provider at a selected time.

2. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an interface unit for displaying to a user the selected data provider.

3. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an implementation agent for connecting said computer system to said selected provider.

4. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 1, further providing a tracking unit for updating data in said at least one database based on current conditions in said service providers.

Claim 5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said decision making unit further includes a logic unit for providing logic based on different decision criteria to said decision making agent unit.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said at least one database includes a first database for storing service quality requirements of each service type and a second database for storing parameters regarding each provider, including billing data, selection priority data, resource condition data and resource information data.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of selecting one of a plurality of service providers for connection to a computer system through a network, said method comprising:

storing data in at least one database regarding parameters of each service

provider and service quality requirements for service types;

retrieving data from said at least one database;

selecting criteria from multiple criteria for making a decision related to said parameters and said service quality requirements; and

selecting one of said plurality of providers to be connected to said computer system based on said data stored by said at least one database and based on said selected criteria; and

scheduling a selected time for connection of the computer system through the network to the selected service provider.

9. (Original) The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

providing logic based on different decision criteria so that said selecting is also based on said logic.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 8, further comprising displaying said selected provider to a user for approval.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 10, further comprising automatically connecting said computer system to said selected provider.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

updating said at least one database based on the real time state of each provider.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 8, wherein said at least one database includes a first database for storing service quality requirements for each service type and a second database for storing resource data concerning each provider, including billing policies, selection priorities, resource condition data and resource information.

14. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a network;

service providers;

a computer system selectively connected through said network to said service providers; and

a selection device for selecting which service provider should be utilized, said selection device including at least one database storing data regarding parameters about each service provider and service quality requirements for service types and a decision making unit for making said selection based on said data stored in said at least one database and on decision making criteria for selecting criteria from multiple criteria to be used in making a decision for selecting one of the service providers to be connected through said network to said computer system; and

a scheduling unit, which is coupled to the decision making unit, for controlling connection of the computer system through the network to the selected service provider at a selected time.

Claims 15 - 17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A system for selecting one of a plurality of service providers to be connected to a computer system through a network, comprising:

- means for storing data in at least one database regarding parameters of each service provider and service quality requirements;
- means for retrieving data from said at least one database;
- means for selecting criteria from multiple criteria to be used in making a decision for selecting one of the service providers based on said stored data and
- means for selecting one of said plurality of service providers to be connected to said computer system through said network based on said stored data from said at least one database and on said selected criteria; and
- a scheduling unit, which is coupled to the decision making unit, for controlling connection of the computer system to the selected service provider at a selected time.

Claim 19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 comprising:

- a user interface coupled to the decision making unit which provides information relating to a type of service to be provided from the service providers and information to be used in making a decision of selecting a service provider from the multiple service providers by the decision making unit.

Claim 21. (Canceled)

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8 comprising:

providing from a user interface information relating to a type of service to be provided from the service provider and information to be used in making a decision of selecting a service provider from the multiple service providers.

Claim 23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14 comprising:

a user interface coupled to the decision making unit which provides information relating to a type of service to be provided from the service providers and information to be used in making a decision of selecting a service provider from the multiple service providers by the decision making unit.

Claim 25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18 comprising:

a user interface coupled to the decision making unit which provides information relating to a type of service to be provided from the service providers and information to be used in making a decision of selecting a service provider from the multiple service providers by the decision making unit.

Claim 27. (Canceled)